



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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August 15, 2007

Mr. Martin Black, AICP, ICMA-CM
City Manager
City of Venice
401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, Florida 34285

Dear Mr. Black:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 413,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – including 31,970 who reside in the state of Florida. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a national transportation system.

AOPA is concerned with your request to the consultants working on the Venice Municipal Airport master plan update, the MEA Group, to consider an alternative that shortens the runways from their current 5,000-foot length. While we understand the concerns of the residents regarding runway protection zones extending past the airport's boundaries, it is our opinion that shortening usable runway lengths in order to move safety zones and also restrict certain uses of the airport is not a decision that will enhance the airport's safety, efficiency and viability. We would strongly oppose any decision to move forward with that course of action. As a matter of national policy, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not looked favorably on proposals submitted that serve to reduce runway length.

The FAA recently invested \$4 million to rehabilitate Runway 13/31. AOPA, along with the FAA and Florida Department of Transportation was part of the reopening ceremonies where all parties committed to continuing to improve the airport, shortening the runways represents a step backward from that commitment.

While we understand the city's desire to consider all reasonable alternatives, alternatives that serve to reduce the full utility of the airport do not merit further study. Based on information currently available on the City's airport web site, it appears that the city's consultant offered an approach that attempts to continue to move the airport into greater compliance with FAA standards. AOPA strongly encourages all airport sponsors to adhere to FAA standards, especially when obligated to do so, such as at Venice.

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Previous planning decisions, changes to airport standards and natural growth have all been factors in planning the airport's future development. With the FAA's grant assurances in place, the city has an obligation to fully protect the airport from incompatible land uses and to ensure the full utility of the airport is maintained. We urge you to reconsider your desire to shorten the runways at Venice Municipal Airport and look at the long-term future for the airport.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this issue. We look forward to working with you and offer our assistance if we can be of further help to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Dunn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Dunn
Vice President
Airports

cc:

Mr. Frederick Watts, Manager, Venice Municipal Airport
Mr. William Ashbaker, State Aviation Manager, Florida Department of Transportation
Mr. Dean Stringer, Manager, FAA Orlando Airports District Office
Mr. Nelson Rhodes, AOPA Florida Regional Representative
Mr. John Yurosko, AOPA Airport Support Network Volunteer VNC